

With the Film Stars who Are in The Limelight

Divorce and Remarriage of Stars Held Largely Responsible for Many Rumors of Laxity Among Moving Picture Folk, Although Better Class Is Almost as Straitlaced as the Ones Who Criticize So Freely

professional scale are seldom arrested anywhere. Does any one recall such an arrest in New York? Of much greater significance is the fact that even in the "inside" gossip of the California movie zone the number of well known players suspected of addiction is very small. Wherever I went I asked, "Who are these dope fiends we've been reading about?" Of the names given me by more than two persons the public would recognize only five. One of these was that of the handsome matinee idol heretofore mentioned. The others were women. There are in the Hollywood district when the studios are booming, which is not the case now, about 3,000 professional actors more or less regularly engaged, in addition to a swarm of extras. About 100 of these are stars or featured performers whose names sparkle in electric lights everywhere. Only five of the 100 were seriously mentioned as addicts even by lovers of scandal, and the only one concerning whom first hand testimony was offered was that of the screen hero said to have been seen jabbing himself with a needle.

I admit that I was an outsider in Hollywood, but I do not believe that any "dope cult" exists among the well known players, and am sure that the great majority of them have the same horror of narcotic drugs as other normal beings. And, by the way, it seems to be pretty well established that William Desmond Taylor, the director who was murdered, was not only trying to get a famous actress to give up morphine but was fighting a group of peddlers who were smuggling drugs into one of the Hollywood studio inclosures. He had caused one of the peddlers to be beaten almost to death at this studio. Most of the drug users are among the low grade extras, certain small comedy companies and a gunman type of hired hand. There has been until recently no concerted effort of the producing managements to stamp out the traffic.

I was told by the Los Angeles police that such an effort now is under way. I might add here that a Hollywood physician who gave me a close-up view of the community as he saw it said that within the past year he had encountered only three addicts. Two were girls, both "extras." The other was a man, a relative of an actor. The Rev. Neal Dodd, an Episcopalian pastor, who is a sort of movie chaplain and is to have charge of a Little Church Around the Corner to be built in Hollywood, said he personally knew of only one "dope case" involving an actor.

So much for narcotic drugs. Next, alcohol. This topic can be dismissed with a few words. California under prohibition is one of the wettest States. Liquor easily is procurable in every large community, including Hollywood. In parts of Los Angeles it is sold openly, notably at soft drink counters. It cannot be bought openly anywhere in Hollywood, which always has been a saloonless town and is now. An old timer said to me, "My daughter, 15 years old, has never seen a drunken person."

The homes of Hollywood are stocked with liquor in about the same proportion as elsewhere. Every thirsty burgher has his list of bootleggers' telephone numbers. He swaps telephone lists with his neighbor, just as he used to trade home brew recipes. He phones his order to the bootlegger and the stuff is delivered at the back door. The prevailing poison is synthetic gin at \$8 a quart. There also is California wine to be had in any quantity, prohibition having at least doubled the price of the grape growers' product. Grapes may be bought in season by the pound or the ton. Unfermented grape juice is sold by the three gallon jar for \$5 the jar, I believe. A friend told me that three parts of water added to the juice produced, after an interval and without any attention whatever, the rarest burgundy. How this exciting mutation is accomplished I don't know, but that is what he said. There is much drinking in Hollywood. Most of it is in the homes of movie and non-movie residents. Many homes are abstemious. Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford are among the abstainers. They serve no liquor in their home except at formal dinners.

An alcoholic cross section of Hollywood presents no phenomena not to be found nowadays in other communities East and West, with this exception: My impression is that the movie people, taken collectively, have in the past given and attended more "booze parties" than most other communities of the same size, and that reckless indulgence has been more frequent. Hollywood probably will dispute this. Anyway, we can agree that since the Arbuckle explosion there has been a slowing up all around.

Another count made against Hollywood is that girls who try to enter the movies or to advance in their profession are subject to the moods of unscrupulous directors and even of "magnates." I asked one of the best informed and frankest of men what truth there was in this.

"I'll tell you," he said, "how the motion pictures got a bad name. They have come

up, you know, rather chaotically, from nothing in a few years. A few years ago the stock company was dominant. It put on cheap pictures costing from \$5,000 to \$25,000, and ground out a picture in two or three weeks. Each studio had a large number of employees earning from \$25 to \$150 a week. Sometimes there were as many as twenty-five directors in one studio. The profession of director was a new one. Some of these were men of bad character but with a knack for this game. They got into the habit of telling actresses that in order to become better actresses they needed emotional experience. The next suggestion was, of course, that the director could help supply this experience.

"I know of girls who were tricked by this sort of fraud, and the truth is that some of them really did become stars. But as the new type of picture developed the stock company passed. The director no longer is all powerful. In the next phase the little tin king was the star. He picked his own company. If he were a rotter, as some stars have been, he selected his women according to their complaisance, and it is only fair to say that some of them were exceedingly complaisant and evidently came to Hollywood with the intention of throwing themselves at the first man they met who could give them rank in the studios.

"Now that phase is passing or has passed. A new functionary, the casting director, has appeared. In the selection of the cast he is supreme. He has nothing to do with the players before the camera. He merely selects them. He stays in his office. In most of the studios he is a fine type of man. The director on the lot must use a woman in the role to which the casting director assigns her. In the course of a year an actress may work under a number of different directors. No one of them has dictatorial power over her."

"And the caliber of the directors is improving all the time. My judgment is that at the present time if a girl at the studios is led astray it is likely to be her own fault. You will hear the opposite view expressed, but do not ignore the fact that many a girl who went to Hollywood to make her fortune as a star and has had to go home because she has no talent has, to save her face in her home town, told the neighbors that she fled that awful Hollywood rather than submit to a wicked director."

"There is no question that some of the well known stage people who were brought here a few years ago 'raised the deuce.' They could not get over the idea that Hollywood either was a one night stand or a pleasure resort with the sky as the limit. The natives, watching their carrying on, exclaimed: 'So these are actors! God save the mark!' The 'joy rider,' the profligate fool, always is under observation, while the silent, decorous majority is ignored. Well, the irresponsible director and the small minded actor were what gave the motion pictures a bad name in southern California. But I have watched Hollywood a long time, and am convinced that it is steadily improving, despite these occasional wild spurges we read about. Most of the bad ones were bad when they came here."

"The bad ones flock together as affinities do everywhere. Every experienced observer knows the source of the trouble that recently has come upon Hollywood. One of the comedy concerns is rotten and ought to be blotted off the face of the map. But the estimate that not 200 members of the 'fast crowd' are actors, actresses or directors is accurate. No census has been taken, but I should say there are about 3,000 actors in the studio district. I mean stars, leads and those who play small parts. The extras are as the sands of the sea and many of them just as shiftless. In boom times they gather around, in slack times they go back to the foundry or wherever they came from. The body from which the working extras are drawn numbers from 8,000 to 15,000 persons. About 150 of them are ex-pugilists. When the studios are busy they work as rubbers and extras; otherwise they are absorbed in the mass. Living is somehow easy for their kind."

"Among the extras are many decent and thrifty souls as well as many weak and shiftless. They are just such humanity as you might think would be attracted to the pictures. For a period of twenty months I carefully checked all the newspaper stories of 'movie actresses' arrested for misdemeanors. Often they were headlined as 'movie stars.' The fact was that not one of them was even a player of small parts. They were comedy girls and extra girls. When arrested, all said they were actresses."

While in Hollywood I also looked into the matter of divorce and informal alli-

ances. A long list of conspicuous players who have not been divorced and who have no intention of being so was recited. A very able man who in the past had been a police reporter in New York and other cities as well as smaller towns testified that there was the least open immorality in Hollywood of any place he had known. Another observer thought there was a greater percentage of couples living together without being married than he had found to be the case elsewhere, except, possibly, in New York. But as apparently everybody in the picture fraternity knows who these couples are, this situation would

A "motion picture fancy" built in Hollywood—the home of the Willat Studio. Only a movie director could design such a quaint structure. Those who live in Hollywood ever are searching for the strange and unique. The man pictured here is the little known power behind the film world—Adolph Zukor, dominant power in the picture making business.



Even in Hollywood they knit. This is Miss Du Pont, a Universal star, passing an afternoon at her Hollywood home.

seem to be exceptional in Hollywood, as elsewhere.

A certain director who has had a succession of women friends devoted to him is notorious because of that fact and is avoided by some of his former friends. In the better circles of moviedom he does not show his face. On the other hand, an actor and an actress who make no secret of being more than friends are received socially because they are rated as "on the level." They are introduced at parties by their individual names, and no questions are asked. Liberal as may seem the social code of a community which regards the other fellow's private affairs as strictly his own business, it does not countenance disloyalty in the common law relation.

A woman succeeded in driving out of Hollywood a man who had cast aside a friend of hers. A baby came to another pair, who were married after one of them had secured a necessary divorce. The mother, who had not been a Puritan, not only gave up drinking and profanity, but began giving humorous curtain lectures to her friends who came to the house. She told them she was not going to have her baby associating with "wild women." With the help of the baby, she bettered the standards of propriety throughout her social circle.

Even those who accuse Hollywood of being a "Roaring Camp" must admit that it has its little "Lucks" as well as its "Sals," and when the recording angel gets

around to the movie town will he not remember them.

The divorce register of Hollywood is formidably long, but the divorce center of the United States, as a certain author pointed out, is in the Middle West, not California. At the risk of offending stage people it must be said that they seem to be more generally tolerant of divorce than others. That is the case among the motion picture people. The average view is that divorce is an evil but not necessarily a stigma.

If two persons can't get along together they are not criticized for the act of separation. All depends on the circumstances. Divorce rarely is questioned in Hollywood except when one or the other of the persons involved is believed to have been badly treated. The most notable example of players who have been divorced and remarried are Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. In Hollywood one hears no breath of scandal concerning them. They had their reasons for doing what they did; they are deeply in love with each other, they behave themselves and that ends it. This is the Hollywood view.

One wonders to what extent Hollywood realizes how strange its notions seem to the "good church people," or to small town people generally, who constitute most of the audiences in motion picture theaters. I heard of a small town, old fashioned, old lace and lavender mother who visited a relative in Hollywood. The relative asked her what she'd like to see. "I do

not want to see Mary Pickford," she said emphatically. "There's been so much in the papers about her divorce!" And yet many good people of Hollywood look up to Mary not only as a leader of their profession, but all that a woman should be. In the face of such conflict of views, you see, it is not the easiest thing in the world to judge "the motion picture capital."

The whole roster of ten players under salary as Goldwyn stars was shown me and I was told that not one of them had been divorced.

I have no reason to question this, and believe the news should be spread broadcast to counteract an impression that nobody in Hollywood knows to-day who his wife will be to-morrow.

I was not much interested in the divorce problem of Hollywood, for there and everywhere it is too deep for me, but for the information of any readers who may want to know just who's who, the following list is submitted:

Divorced and not married again: Jean Acker, Mary Allen, Agnes Ayers, Gladys Brockwell, Carlisle Blackwell, Genevieve Blinn, Sylvia Breamer, Herbert Brenon, Lawson Butte, Mae Busch, Barbara Castleton, Charlie Chaplin, Marguerite Clayton, Lew Cody (three times), Jack Conway, Donald Crisp, Kathryn Clifford, Dorothy Dalton, Allan Dwan, Elliott Dexter, Marie Doro, June Elvidge, Bessie Eyton, Adele Farrington, Casson Ferguson, Maude Fealy, Fred Fishback, Marguerite Fisher, Ann Forrest, Louise Glaum, Edna Goodrich, Winifred Greenwood, Kenneth Hartan, Mildred Harris, Helen Holmes, E. Mason Hopper, Jacques Jaccard, Dick Jones, Anna Lehr, Elmo Lincoln, Ann Little, Katherine MacDonald, Marguerite Marsh, Christine Mayo, Harry Hillard, Jack Mower, Anna Q. Nilsson, Marshall Neilan, Jane Novak, Doris Pawn, Irene Rich, Ruth Roland, Alma Rubens, William Russell, Ford Sterling, Nell Shipman, Ruth Stonehouse, Gloria Swanson, Myrtle Stedman, Hugh Thompson, Mary Thurman, Laurence Trimble, Rodolph Valentino, Lillian Walker, Pearl White, Marjorie Wilson, Clara Kimball Young, James Young (three times).

Divorced and married again: May Allison, Leah Baird, Reginald Barker, Frank Beal, Lawson Butt, George Beban, Noah Beery, Wallace Beery, Richard Bennett, Francis Billington, Hobart Bosworth, Bert Bracken, Hazel Daly, Hampton Del-ruth, Ruby De Remer, Jack Dillon, William Edeson Duncan, J. Gordon Edwards, Robert Ellison, John Emerson (now married to Anita Loos), Douglas Fairbanks, Franklin Farnum, Eugene Ford, Allan Forrest (now married to Lottie Pickford), Pauline Frederick (now married to a school-days sweetheart), Fred Granville, Bert Graby, Jack Gilbert, Hale Hamilton, James W. Horne, Louise Huff, Irene Hunt, Paul G. Hurst, Peggy Hyland, Rex Ingram

(now married to Alice Terry), Thomas Jefferson, Emory Johnson, Beatrice Joy, Alice Joyce, James Kirkwood, George Larkin, Edward Le Saint, Wilfred Lucas, John P. McGowan, J. Farrell McDonald, Frank Mayo, Harry Millarde, Tom Mix, Owen Moore, Tom Moore, Mae Murray, Marie Manon, Fred Niblo, Wheeler Oakman, Mary Pickford, Lottie Pickford, Theodore Roberts, Wesley H. Ruggles, Paul Scardon, Rolin Sturgeon, Conway Tearle, Mabel Van Buren, Eric von Stroheim, Henry Walthal, Crane Wilbur, Kathryn Williams (married four times, now wife of Charles Eytan).

Divorce suits now pending are omitted. No doubt almost as long a list of undivorced persons could be prepared.

This article has come to the end of its allotted space without having more than touched on the brighter and more wholesome phases of Hollywood life, which do exist abundantly.

Making of pictures is called an "industry" in Hollywood, and it is so. The cost of many feature productions is from \$3,000 to \$5,000 a camera day. It takes at least five camera weeks to complete the picture, making the total cost sometimes more than \$100,000. The camera cannot be fooled—very much. If an actor has been out all night rioting, drinking or gambling, the camera sees it. He cannot go on. Unless scenes can be "shot" not requiring that actor's presence, the whole production is held up. Result, loss of between \$3,000 and \$5,000. If the picture has progressed so far that to call everything off would be ruinous, the offending actor is retained, but unless he reforms that is his last picture for this producer. He acquires a reputation for unreliability, and nobody wants him.

In a girl of the pictures, youth, vivacity, freshness—they must be real, not counterfeited—are everything. If they are all she has to give, if she does not develop dramatically, the length of her screen life is only about five years. They are precious years. Each day is a thing to be treasured and guarded. To the camera she must look the same every day of the weeks and even months that pass before a picture is finished. She cannot appear "on the lot" with a haggard face, with circles under the eyes, with crow foot wrinkles scarring the smoothness of her skin. All this is intolerable. The actors and actresses know it as well as the producers and directors.

It follows then—and is a fact—that the typical actor and actress, even if predisposed toward giddiness, is, during the long, hard days when a picture is being made, a model of behavior. The letdown, if it comes, is in the interval between pictures. But even in these vacations the players have to remember that when the next engagement begins they must look their best. So, to a degree, good conduct is self-enforced in Hollywood.

This is especially true of actors of "straight parts." The character actors, whose faces are often changed by makeup, do not have to be so careful.

